

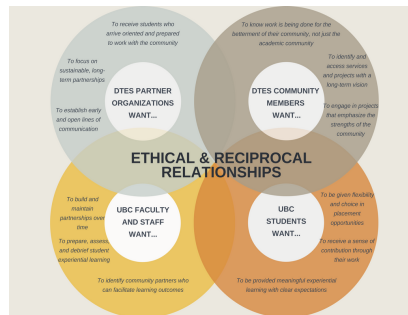
Learning Exchange as a Hub of Experiential Learning

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Overview

The focus on experiential learning is growing across Canadian universities. Ideally, experiential learning provides opportunities for students to connect their classroom learning to paid or unpaid work off campus while benefiting partner organizations. However, when relationships involve populations and communities that have been historically marginalized, the approach to these relationships requires more careful consideration. The first phase of our project has focused on understanding the principles for effective partnership in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) based on dialogues with community partners, students, and instructors/practicum facilitators.



Source: Creating Reciprocal and Ethical Learning Partnerships in the DTES

In our second phase, we are in the process of creating and implementing tools to help others engage in such partnerships. Our work builds on the knowledge and resources available from the UBC Learning Exchange (LE) and the Centre for Community-Engaged Learning (CCEL). Collaboration among several partners involved in this project builds capacity and encourages reciprocity and mutuality in relationships, which will, in turn, lead to sustainable benefits for students.

Work Accomplished to Date

"Remember that this community knows itself better than you. So we're not ever entering into an experiential community as experts if we don't have those shared experiences."
- Cecily Nicholson

Preparation for Literature

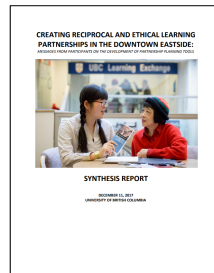
Our dialogues helped us develop a 360 degree perspective of the issues that impede or promote ethical experiential learning engagements. We consulted with instructors, coordinators, students and DTES organizations. We also reviewed "Shifting the Story" videos (produced by the Learning Exchange) that centre feedback from community members on ethical engagements in the DTES.

Literature and Graphics

Creating reciprocal and ethical learning partnerships in the DTES: Messages from participants on the development of partnership planning tools

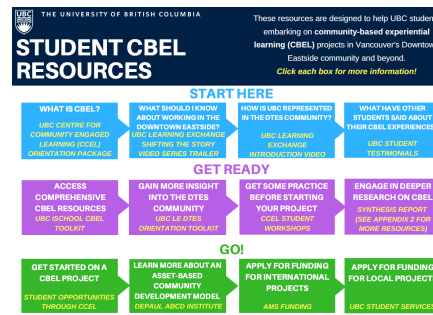
- Synthesis Report (full version)
- Call to Action Report (abridged version)

These reports share the knowledge of people in the DTES who are continuously thinking about how to engage in ethical and reciprocal experiential learning partnerships in the community. Partners include UBC students, instructors and coordinators, and staff members at DTES neighbourhood organizations who work for the benefit of community members.



Tools Developed

From the reports, we developed an appendix and infographic to help community partners, faculty, and students at different stages to develop experiential learning endeavours in the DTES. See example below.



Courses Taught

ADHE 330: Community-Based Adult Education. This class was held at the UBC Learning Exchange and examined the kinds of adult learning programs taking place in the DTES Vancouver community. The course emphasized the importance of knowing the social, economic, cultural and political environment in developing and conducting adult education programs with and for individuals and groups.

"I think it's really important to know the neighbourhood first as much as you can. ... It's good to remember that we ... get so many requests for studies. ... we're constantly going for funding trying to ... stay afloat and it takes staff time to work with students and researchers. If you're going to come down here and do the work, think about what you can give back." - Phoenix

Ongoing Work

We are currently working on several ideas for tools:

1. Infographic for different partners indicating available partnership resources with a companion Appendix to be added to our 'Creating Partnerships' report.
2. Podcasts that address key aspects of effective partnership, featuring: a) instructors in dialogue with community partners who have longstanding partnerships in the DTES and beyond, and b) students who have taken on leadership roles in the community.
3. Short 'trailers' highlighting key themes from each podcast.
4. A composite story of key themes from podcasts using graphic facilitation and the UBC Lightboard tool.
5. Possible use of UBC wikis or CMS to share information among partners.



Acknowledgement

This project was researched, written, and produced on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xwmaḡkwaḡam (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səlilwataʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsilil-Waututh) Nations.

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